

What is claimed is:

1. A method for screening for a supercolonic disease in a patient, the method comprising the steps of:
 - 5 determining the integrity of nucleic acids in a patient sample comprising shed cells or cellular debris; and
 - identifying said patient as having disease if intact nucleic acids are present in said sample in an amount greater than a predetermined threshold.
- 10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said disease is cancer or pre-cancer.
- 15 3. The method of claim 2, wherein said cancer is selected from the group consisting of lung cancer, esophageal cancer, prostate cancer, stomach cancer, pancreatic cancer, liver cancer, cancer of the bile duct, cancer of the duodenum, and lymphoma.

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